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## AN ARTIST'S NOTES AT TEWKESBURY

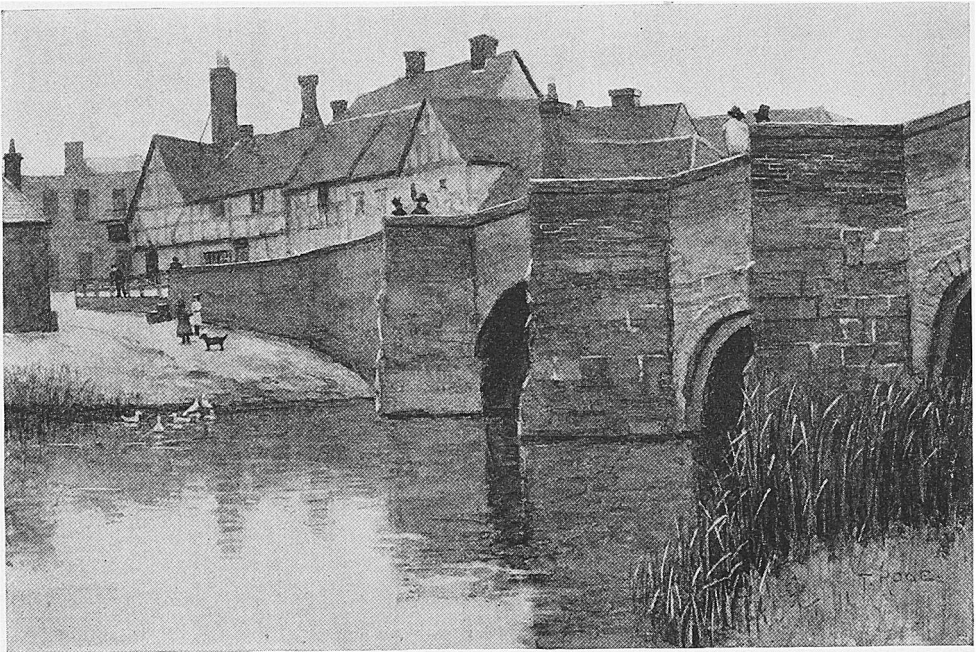
BY TRYTHALL ROWE

*With original illustrations by the author.*

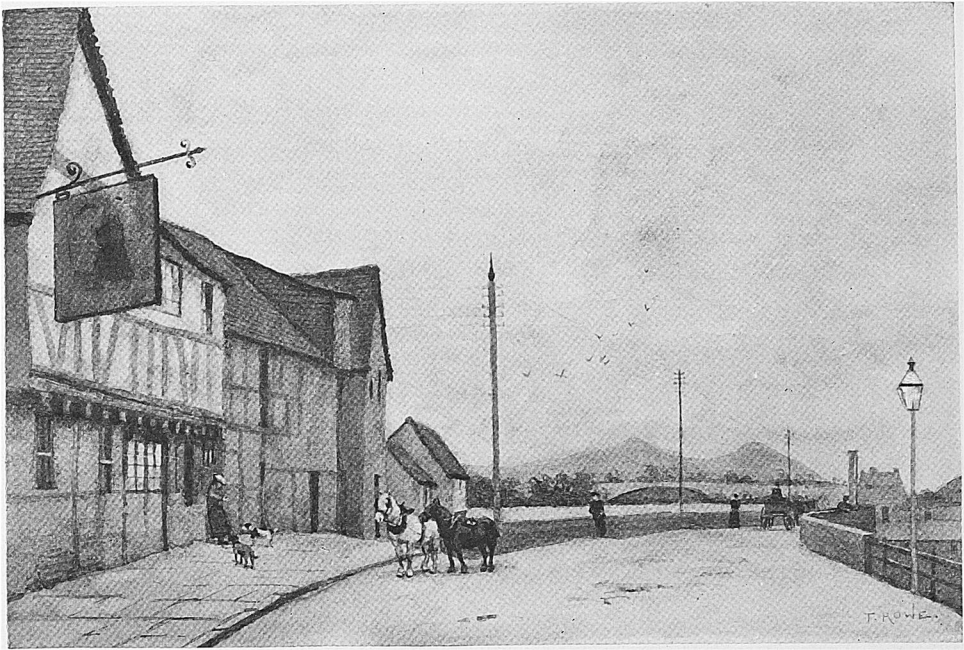
FIRST impressions are often misleading, and my introduction to Tewkesbury, a historic old town in Gloucestershire, standing at the junction of the Avon and Severn rivers, and consequently in one of the most beautiful districts of England, was an instance in point. The station is a little way from the town, and the walk of about ten minutes reveals nothing of any interest to the artist. The eye looks in vain for any bit of half-timbered house or quaint gable, and it is not until the High Street is reached that you feel rewarded for your journey.

Up and down this street you will find, wedged in between the commonplace, beautiful old houses, three or four stories high, with the old beams showing, and in some cases carved ; the upper stories projecting in a most quaint and unexpected way. At one end of the street stands the Bear Inn, a fine old hostelry, in excellent preservation, and which has fortunately escaped the hands of the restorer. The old buff plaster front, studded with dark-brown oak beams, is a beautiful bit of color, and the deep purple of the Malvern Hills in the distance makes a fine note in the picture.

It is but a step farther to the old Mythe Bridge, and as you lean over its buttresses and note the Avon flowing past the old town, with the massive Norman tower of the Abbey in the distance, you will find yourself in the midst of material that will keep your brushes busy for weeks, and all of it close to your hand. The



THE OLD MYTHE BRIDGE AND BEAR INN



THE BEAR INN

best view of the bridge is to be had from the boat-yard, and here one can sit and work peacefully all day long without being disturbed ; from this point the front of



A TEWKESBURY STREET

the Bear Inn is seen above the bridge, and the irregular sky-line of roofs and chimneys fits in admirably. Age has mellowed all the colors here. The brown sandstone bridge with its brick coping, the buildings beyond, have all been exposed to Nature's loving touch for centuries; and how delicately and harmoniously she has tinted everything! At flood-time this bridge is completely under water, and its piers are notched and scored by the continual fretting of the Avon.

A walk along the river's bank under the town, discloses several views of the Abbey, past a foreground of rushes and water, and there are always boys fishing or bathing to give a touch of life to the scene. Crossing the little foot-bridge by the mill near the Abbey, one comes upon a corner that Corot would have loved:



A CORNER THAT COROT WOULD HAVE LOVED

the willow-trees are there, and the old punt reflected in the stream; c'est seulement le sentiment qui manque!

The Abbey is close at hand, and is after all the most important feature of the town. The architecture and history of the building are interesting, but even if you do not go inside the door or read one single word about it, you will find it impossible to be indifferent to it. Its massive, weather-beaten tower dominates the whole neighborhood, and from many points of view is strikingly picturesque. There are some meadows on the east side of the town, with a winding foot-path; and willows, and a stream, with cattle grazing, or perhaps a game of cricket going on. Then, in the background, you get this huge gray tower. Another fine view is to be had from a lane on the western side leading to the ferry; here on a fine evening you get the sun setting on the Abbey, and in the foreground a shapely group of tall gaunt trees.

The Ham is a large meadow in the western outskirts of Tewkesbury, with the



CHURCH STREET

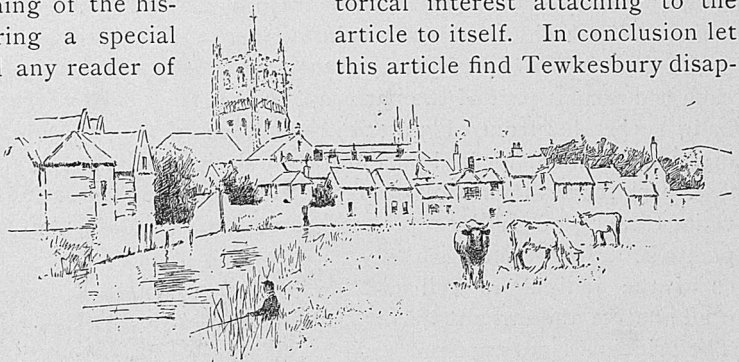
T.R.

Severn at its farther boundary, and one gets a good panoramic view of the town from here. This is the plain where the battle of Tewkesbury was fought in the terrible civil war of Cromwell's time; and it is called Bloody Meadow by the townspeople to this day. Barges and small vessels come up the Severn, and unload at a wharf against the flour-mills, and give another picturesque feature to the landscape.

Several good "motives" may be obtained on the Avon, going toward Eckington, and the old bridge at this village is in itself quite worth a visit.

I have said nothing of the history, this requiring a special me add, that should any reader of pointing, there are other places of interest within easy access. Gloucester can be reached in about forty minutes, and Stratford-on-Avon, with all its memories of Shakespeare, is only a little farther away.

torical interest attaching to the article to itself. In conclusion let this article find Tewkesbury disap-



TOWER OF THE ABBEY FROM THE MEADOW

Indeed, the whole of this old western territory is full of artistic delight. Turn which way you will from Tewkesbury you will be arrested by mediæval architecture, the quaint conceits of centuries of men who knew the art of embellishing even the commonplace; and by scenery not to be surpassed in England for richness of color. Spring, summer, and fall, the orchards of the western shires are a very glory of tone, and later, even up to the edge of winter, the laden trees, though leafless, are gemmed with vermillion fruit which sparkles against a setting of lichened branches, the result of years on years of the cunning of that incomparable artist, Nature.



THE ABBEY FROM THE AVON